

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 07515

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: OREP
SUBJECT: COMMENT ON BYRD VISIT

1. WE CONSIDER THAT THE VISIT HERE OF SENATOR BYRD WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL. HE CONVEYED IN EXCELLENT MANNER HIS POSITIVE FEELING TOWARD SPAIN AND THE DETERMINATION OF THE UNITED STATES TO BE SUPPORTIVE AND HELPFUL TO SPAIN AS A NEWLY-DEMOCRATIC NATION AND AN IMPORTANT DEFENSE PARTNER TO BOTH PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ AND FIRST VICE PRESIDENT GUTIERREZ MELLADO AND RECEIVED USEFUL FEEDBACK AND FELT

HE WAS RECEIVING A STRONGER AND MORE AUTHORITATIVE MESSAGE OF UNITED STATES WILL TO BE AS SUPPORTIVE AS POSSIBLE THAN HE HAD BEFORE. I THINK SENATOR BYRD LEFT MADRID FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE STRENGTH OF SPANISH LEADERSHIP, WITH THE DIFFICULT DECISIONS IT IS TAKING, AND WITH THE PRESENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE IMPORTANCE OF SPAIN.

2. PRESS COVERAGE (SEPTTEL PROVIDES WRAP-UP) WAS MODERATELY HEAVY AND MIXED. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE FOCUS WAS ON THE ISSUE OF POSSIBLE SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO AND ALLEGED US PRESSURE TO THAT END. BUT THE SENATOR'S FLAT ASSERTION THAT HE HAD NEITHER MENTIONED THE TOPIC NOR COME TO SPAIN TO DEAL WITH IT WAS VERY HELPFUL AND ACCURATELY AND FULLY REPORTED. THERE WAS ALSO DETECTABLE IN MUCH
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OF THE COVERAGE AN EXPLICIT AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER IN THE US SYSTEM AND OF THE FACT SENATOR BYRD WAS ON A PRESIDENTIAL MISSION, AS WELL AS AN IMPLICIT SENSE OF GRATIFICATION AT THE VISIT HERE OF SO HIGH-LEVEL AN EMISSARY.

3. THERE WERE SOME DRAWBACKS: NEITHER KING JUAN CARLOS

NOR FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA WAS ABLE TO MEET WITH THE CODEL, BOTH BECAUSE THE VISIT CAME ON A WEEKEND AND BECAUSE SATURDAY, JULY 1, WAS THE FINAL DAY OF THE VISIT OF FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING, WHO CAME HERE ACCOMPANIED BY FIVE CABINET MINISTERS AND 300 STAFF MEMBERS. DESPITE THE TIMING DIFFICULTY, SEVERAL TOP GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL LEADERS, INCLUDING GUTIERREZ MELLADO, SENATE PRESIDENT FONTAN, AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO THE US LLADO, THE UCD'S PEREZ LLORCA, MOYA, AND JAVIER RUPEREZ, AND THE PSOE'S MUGICA, CAME TO MY DINNER FOR SENATOR BYRD ON SATURDAY EVENING, WHICH WAS A FURTHER INDICATION OF THE IMPORTANCE THE SPANISH ATTACHED TO THE VISIT. EATON

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